

	<p align="center">Illinois Small Business Development Center Network</p> <p align="center">WEEKLY CONNECTION</p> <p align="center">Entrepreneurship ~ Innovation ~ Technology</p>	
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"Professional Guidance for Business Growth"

July 6, 2015

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Spotlight on Success – Brazil Express Churrasco Grill

When Ana Santos-Vitelo saw a void in the Brazilian food scene, she wanted to fill it. She and her husband did just that when they opened Brazil Express Churrasco Grill in Schaumburg. A casual steakhouse and affordable alternative to other Brazilian restaurants, Brazil Express offers a pleasant, family-friendly atmosphere and extensive selection of Brazilian fire-grilled meats, salads, side dishes and desserts.



Ms. Santos-Vitelo explains they found their niche, "I recognized a need. People wanted the Brazilian experience, but they wanted it to be more affordable. A lot of Brazilian restaurants are very fancy and often over the top. I saw an opportunity to open the first casual Brazilian steakhouse. We could deliver the same amazing quantity and quality, and we could make it a more affordable experience. "

The couple had over a decade of restaurant experience before they chose to open their own place. They found a landlord who rented space at a reduced rate and used that savings to invest in kitchen equipment.

She described the value of working with the **Illinois Small Business Development Center at Harper College**: "I started meeting with the SBDC and taking their classes before I opened the restaurant. One of the classes highlighted the difficulties of opening a business. The instructor wanted us to know it wasn't going to be an easy-breezy experience. At the end of the class, when he asked who still wanted to open a business, I raised my hand. I still believed I could do it. I started visiting the SBDC offices more often—sometimes every other week, sometimes once a week—to get information and talk about

how things were going. They gave great guidance, and they were very approachable. Every time I called, they helped me. I'm very happy I found them. I don't think I would be where I am today without them. I'm even thinking about expanding now. Free programs and assistance like what the SBDC provides make a big difference for entrepreneurs.

To learn more about the Brazil Express Churrasco Grill go to:

<http://www.brazilexpressgrill.com/#!home/mainPage>

SBDC's In The News - SBDC Poised for Growth Competition

The first annual Poised for Growth Business Plan Competition, organized by the Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Elgin Community College (ECC), recently celebrated its first winner.



The celebration took place Tuesday, June 23, at 25N Coworking, located at 25 North Third St., in Geneva.

"The purpose of the competition was to get existing businesses to plan for their company's growth in a deliberate way, and demonstrate their ability to manage that growth responsibly for three years," said Sybil Ege (on the right in the accompanying picture). Ege, an ECC Business Analyst and SBDC Center Director, organized the competition and provided coaching services to the contestants.

Michelle Lipinski of Rubino Engineering, Inc. in Elgin (on the left in the accompanying picture) took first place in the competition.

The company was awarded a \$10,000 cash prize and a consulting engagement offered through the Fox Valley Entrepreneurship Center (FVEC) valued at \$5,000. The prize money was provided through donations from local organizations.

The remaining finalists were; Ariel Ries of Smalltown Skate Shop, Matt and Chris Klein of Klein's Quality Produce, LLC, Dan Mancera of Cassandra Strings, Inc., Gary and Diana McNeil of D'Angelo Natural Spring Water, Inc., Anja Griess of Doggie Has It, Tom and Athena Seefurth of Chef Tom, Inc., Derik Bahl of Quality Systems Solutions, Inc., Gladys Moscoso of E-M Metal Fab. Corp., and Laurie Huspen of Valuable Resources, Co.

To participate, a business had to be headquartered in Illinois, be at least three years old, be classified as "for profit" and a "small business." Thirty-two qualified contestants applied between January 12 and March 31, 2015.

The competition consisted of three phases. Phase one confirmed applicant eligibility. All who qualified progressed to phase two, where owners submitted a written plan detailing their tactics for the future growth of their business over the next three years. In the final phase, the top ten contestants gave a brief presentation to a panel of four judges on June 9th. The scores from phases two and three were added together to determine a final score for each of the contestants.

The SBDC hopes to interest three-to-five times more businesses to apply for next year's competition, which will be promoted at a more regional level.

The Illinois Small Business Development Center at Elgin Community College provides counseling services and business workshops to start-ups and existing small businesses. To learn more, visit elgin.edu/sbdc or call the IL SBDC at ECC at 847-214-7488.

Maximizing Neoserra – Narratives

Use "Narratives" to record time spent on advocacy, economic development, resource development and other non-advising efforts. Go to "Narratives," then choose "New" and see the dropdown box for a list of categories.

Neoserra Deadline – COB July 13th

REMINDER !!! IMPORTANT NOTICE !!! Neoserra Deadline Monday, July 13, 2015

All Illinois SBDCs, Illinois SBDC International Trade Centers, Illinois SBDC with TIES and Illinois PTACs,

June 30, 2015 marks the end of State Fiscal Year 2015, the end of the 3rd Quarter for the Federal Fiscal Year 2015, the completion of the first 6 months for the Illinois SBDC 2015 program year and the end of the program year 2015 for the Illinois PTAC Program. These are very important reporting periods for our State and Federal stakeholders. It is vital that each center compile ALL of its outstanding client information and make sure it is **ALL entered into Neoserra by close of business (COB), Monday, July 13, 2015.** It is extremely important that all of the center performance information is entered into Neoserra.

The information that needs to be entered into Neoserra ASAP includes all new client profiles and client advising activity, all outstanding business advisor notes, all client milestones and any outstanding economic impact information, the required narrative reports and success story profiles. Please be sure to follow up with your clients and secure any outstanding economic impact verifications to ensure you receive credit for your efforts. Also, please don't forget to enter all of your program costs for Jan-June 2015 into the Grantee Reporting system (GRS).

Thank you for giving this important notice your utmost attention.

Valued Resources – Background Checking Services

Business News Daily offers a list of different employee background checking services they deem "the best" at the link below.

<http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/7638-best-background-check-services.html>

IESBGA News – Luman Award

A recent article has highlighted that the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Southern Illinois University Carbondale has won a Roger Luman Program Excellence Award from the Illinois Entrepreneurship and Small Business Growth Association (IESBGA). Please go the [article HERE](#) for more details. Special Congratulations to the Illinois SBDC team at SIU-C.

Network News and Moves - QuickBooks Connect

Last Thursday, many of you received the email from Intuit shown below. Intuit is a tremendous partner with America's SBDC and continues to be extremely supportive of the SBDC mission. Please help us promote this special event in Chicago next week on Thursday, July 16th. Also, if any members of the Illinois SBDC Network are able to participate in the event please let your Network Coordinator, Rod H. and me know, via email. Thanks.

Hello Illinois SBDCs,

We have officially launched the website and registration page for the [QuickBooks Connect event](#) in Chicago, Illinois. On **Thursday, July 16th in Chicago, IL**, at The Geraghty at 2520 S. Hoyne Ave., Intuit will be hosting the QuickBooks Connect local event. There will be one, day-long session that will feature Interactive workshops on marketing, finance and managing your business. It will also include expert speakers, local small business owners and successful entrepreneurs who will share insider tips, things to avoid and what helped them thrive. We would love your help promoting this event to your respective networks and small business clients. It will be a great opportunity for them to share their stories, network with others and learn tips and tricks that will help them grow. I know some of you might be located far from the Chicago area but wanted you to be in the know just in case they would be in the area.

Here is the link to share with everyone:

<http://www.quickbookslocal.com/chicago/>

Registration is only \$25 for participants and we also have a FREE registration code for SBDC representatives. The code is: **SBDC** and that should give you free registration to attend. If you can send a representative or two from your SBDC center for the event, that would be fantastic. We will have a Local Resources booth that you can setup and meet with small business owners throughout the event. We had over 500 attendees at the Atlanta event and Jeff Patterson and Mary Brown Phillips from the Atlanta SBDC had a great time. Please let me know if you plan on attending.

In addition, we also have a special promo code for your small business clients to attend for free. The code is: **QBCHI**

Thanks so much! I hope to see all of you there! If you have any questions feel free to email or call me. Troy Marcyes | Communications Manager | Intuit | Tel: 650.944.5991 | Cell: 650-450-7621 | Fax: 650.944.5055

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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and DCEO Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology each Monday to members of the DCEO Illinois SBDC Network to provide the service delivery partners with regular updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. You may send any information to share with the Illinois SBDC Network to Tom.Becker@illinois.gov. Please feel free to forward this update to other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.

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